Happy 250th USA!!

JULY 2026

# MECÉ

## SAVANNAH STREBOR

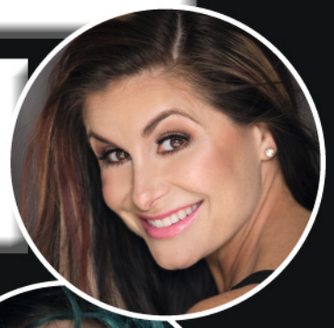
***Our July MITM***

**A Royal Connection?**
**We Tell You How!**

**Two Favorite Models**
**Of Our David Shared**

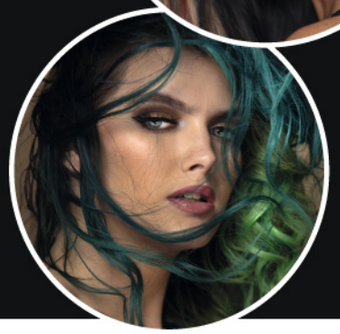
**Finding a Playmate,**
**Yes, Hooters Helped**

**David Mecey** – Founder, Publisher, Photographer, Writer, Driver. The man whose 'near-name' sits atop our magazine. One of Playboy's former staff and contract photographers who will always cherish his history with the Bunny. David brings what he did for that iconic publication to Mecé. Similar yes, yet different. David's wish, to add a contemporary, sophisticated feel to the photography while upholding the highest standards for the art. For those yearning to know, also sharing how it's done.



**Nicole Bigham** – Publisher – A businesswoman and former Miss Pennsylvania USA. A longtime friend of David's she is an advocate for women and their right to be self-reliant and strong while also being beautiful and showing it. She brings a feminine touch to MECÉ along with strong leadership qualities and respect for David's photography and history.

**Wade Monroe** – Editor - Charismatic graduate from the University of North Texas, an entrepreneur with a penchant for philosophy and the arcane. He is a life student, musician, a published and passionate photographer renowned for his artistry in capturing the grace and beauty of women.



**Niki Westerfield** – Assoc. Editor – A captivating woman who has her hands in many projects from interior design to photography and even makeup direction. Niki embodies the essence of a modern "girl's girl".

**Autumn Huse** – Art Director – MITM, Makeup artist, body artist, music lover, a woman who loves life that comes in all forms of fun. Though she graduated with a degree in sociology, her love of the arts has that taking a backseat. She should be simply titled artist.

**Mark Thomas** – U.K. Editor – Our UK editor comes to us from 'across the pond', bringing fascinating features on Britain's extensive history, its perspective of his great country (as seen from there) and the market of lifestyle goods; cigars, spirits of drink, tailoring, and engineering of all types. He also offers articles on some of the most interesting individuals that puts Britain on the world's stage.

**Kelvin Bloom** – Talent Acquisitions – We have a distinguished individual joining MECÉ as Talent Acquisitions. KB's background is entrepreneur venture capital and the world of IPOs. He brings over four decades working as CEO in the tourist industry & many major hotel chains. KB's s travel and business acumen and contacts will help MECE find our talent from around the world.

**Tiffany Taylor** – Discovered by our founder, Tiffany would become Playboy's Miss November 1998's Playmate of the Month. Besides her acting and modeling career she graduated from the Univ of Maryland with a degree in criminal justice.

**Tim Bennett** – Airline Pilot, Pilot Instructor, Photographer - Tim is a man of many talents, from flying for a major commercial airline to training their pilots, he's also a talented beauty photographer. Dallas-based, Tim joins MECÉ as our Assoc. Photo Director.

# THE CAST

# M

## *A Letter from our Founder*

Welcome to MECÉ Magazine!

As a photographer, most of my career was all about photographing women for Playboy. I worked for the magazine as a staff photographer for well over two decades. I was all about the "Rabbit;" I walked it, talked it, lived it, but most of all, photographed it during those years Hef was at the helm.

We feel that classic style of photographing beautiful women in sexy light fading away. Even the models known as Angels are no more. We are creating a place where this artform can flourish. A place to celebrate women's beauty, both inside and out, along with their necessity in this world.

It seems as if society's mad dash toward equality has more to do with reducing the talents, accomplishments, and natural gifts of select people than empowering and encouraging people to thrive using their unique talents. Instead of convincing people to downplay their natural gifts to seem more accepting, we challenge all of society to celebrate the differences. We want to emphasize the strengths in people while minimizing their weaknesses.

With MECÉ Magazine, we intend to bring back a taste of that classic look, allowing women to be as proud of how incredible they look as well as shining symbols of intelligence. A contemporary feel, yet with touches of the classic style men and women have loved for so many years, to readers of a younger generation who will also revel in the lifestyle our magazine offers.

Lighting and refining my photography to reflect the model's beauty and personality have always been my signature trademarks. Whether you are a longtime fan or growing enthusiast, I look forward to sharing all my experience and talent with you at MECÉ Magazine.

In addition to the gorgeous photographs, we will be sharing articles about lifestyle interests such as beauty products, cuisine, wine, travel, all types of tech, automobiles, and yes, tips on photography. Even some magic thrown into the mix here and there.

We will introduce you to a luxury lifestyle and give you tools and information that will help you be a part of that scene. Our goal is to inspire our readers to live life better while having fun, an important element.

We will always strive to provide consistent and compelling content to our readers. Let us begin with one key acronym I want to announce: M.I.T.M!

Welcome to MECÉ Magazine's Model in the Middle, the photograph that will be the only image stretching edge to edge, 11" x 22", in our magazine. This is the highest honor we can bestow on one of our models, the one who represents all we are at MECÉ Magazine. She must demonstrate natural beauty, yes, but also a dedication to community, and for making a better world in which we live.

In closing, we would like to extend an invitation to models and photographers who are interested in being a part of our vision to contact us. If you are interested in joining us, look for the link and submission guidelines on our website.

We invite you to open our pages, look around at the beauty and articles we offer.

Cheers!

**Savaannah Strebor - July '26 MITM**
**HMUA by LaDonna Stein**
**Photograph by David Mecey**

## EDITORIAL STAFF

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# IT'S JULY!

We rarely do 'seasonal' style issues, but this month is quite special in a couple ways. First, this month is July 2026, marking America's 250th birthday being an independent nation, a Constitutional Republic. So, we at MECÉ wish our USA a Very Happy Anniversary & Birthday! Let the fireworks begin…

As for that second item we mentioned, it's special due to our MODEL in the Middle. She did her photo shoot unlike any ever done before at MECÉ. She was photographed during our founder, David Mecey's photo workshop a couple months ago in Dallas. More on that in a moment.

We open though with a pictorial on another remarkable model for our founder. Her name is Cora Skinner, and she was one of David's favorite swimwear, lingerie, and fashion models during his time living in LA. He's sharing a handful of his favorite photographs they created to show just how versatile and beautiful she was as a subject.

As mentioned, this month marks a dramatic moment for America. It was 250 years ago that we broke from England's rule to form our own nation. Our UK editor, Mark Thomas has found something quite fascinating. We have, in a bizarre twist, remained linked to the English monarchy. That being through our presidents! Read all about it in 'US Presidents; The Hidden Royal Connection'.

For our Q&A-7 this month David was able to interview and photograph one of the hottest sax players out there today, Darren Motamedy. He's played with some of the greats, Kenny G, Ronnie Laws and remains himself a gifted soloist playing venues worldwide.

As mentioned earlier, to us this month has two special moments. One, our nation's anniversary, the other our July MODEL in the Middle, the striking Savannah Strebor. Not only is she our MITM for MECÉ, she's also the first to be photographed with an audience watching!

Nine attendees had that opportunity while attending David Mecey's May workshop in Dallas. It was the first time David allowed people to observe from start to finish the entire process of creating a MODEL in the Middle feature.

Savannah was incredible and we have one awesome MITM for it. Catch all of her, yes, in the middle.

Speaking of Savannah's shoot taking place during a workshop, attempting to do that photo shoot, control a room full of attendees, and at the same time document his setups was a bit overwhelming. You can thank a couple of the attendees, Kimberly Chelain and Eric D for sharing their photos of David's setups. Read it all in this month's How it Was Done.

This month's Asking for a Friend has our Tiffany Taylor again sharing wise and sincere advice to those readers needing help with personal & often trying moments in their lives. Find it in her column this month.

Models are and have been a part of David's life since he first got serious about photography. He's met and photographed thousands with so, so many still his friend. One of those was a woman who went from swimsuit modeling to ending up a Playboy Bunny at the LA Playboy Club. Though Jennifer Palmer never posed for Playboy, David did finally convince her to allow him to show her potential. Their collab is her striking pictorial.

How Playboy found models was so different back in the '80s,'90s, even earlier, before the digital era arrived. Back in those pre-digital days it was mail-in submissions or a chance meeting with someone who worked at the magazine. Or a combination. You can read about how it worked and how David found Playmate Lynne Austin in this month's A Loving Look.

That's our July and if we could share digital fireworks, we'd sure do it! Enjoy the celebrations and enjoy our issue, because we feel this month, both are epic!

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# MECÉ

...celebrating the eternal allure
of women around the world

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# Cora Skimmer

Over the years I've worked with so many beautiful women. To be honest, I've lost count. But if you consider every woman I've ever interviewed, tested either with a Polaroid camera or film or digital camera, the number would be somewhere north of 20,000.

Yes, I know, that's a staggering number, one I feel many of you might not believe. But if you step back and think of all those interviews I've done over those 20-plus years working for Playboy, including Playmate searches, college searches, searches for multi-girl features, that number should be quite believable. Then add all the women with whom I've worked since those Playboy years, (which I might add ended in 2004), there should be no question of its legitimacy.

Now, if you whittle down that Playboy number, and those after, to 'only' professional models, those who make their living only by modeling, that number drops into the mere few thousand. Still, quite a large number but more in line. Then within those ranks, there were those standout models who were/are absolutely brilliant individuals with whom to work.

From personality to also how they looked, then also how well they performed in front of the camera. Their natural ability to move and pose without hardly a word from me other than maybe, slow down…

Cora was one of those very special models. She was all fashion and beauty but also aware of herself enough that you could also add the word 'sexy' when describing her on-camera attitude. I counted myself very lucky to have had the opportunity to work with her so often.

These photographs merely touch the tip of the iceberg of what we did together during her modeling years. Because a few years ago she got married, began a family, as so many ladies do, and I say good for her. Her husband is a very lucky man.

But during our time together we worked with clients from around the world. From doing photographs at awesome locations in California, to the beaches and islands in the Caribbean, to photographs for clients from London and beyond. In every instance Cora stepping up with a look and attitude that would always fit the shot.

I must admit, many of the photographs we did for clients for their catalogs, one sheets, etc., could just as easily been made into some stunning posters. I feel the first few photographs in this feature are proof of that.

Let me add that the images we created in The Bahamas are some of my most favorite work I've done. I've included four of those in this series of Cora. The first two were from when we had been doing a series of fashion shots out on location for a boutique located inside the huge resort, Atlantis, located on Paradise Island, Bahamas. We had finished the day's shots and, on our way back to Nassau, spotted a small restaurant sitting at the edge of a bluff overlooking the ocean. I felt it was the perfect spot for dinner.

As we stopped, I noticed a sailboat sitting anchored not far away, but at the same time, the end of a gorgeous Bahamian sunset happening. I walked to the edge of the bluff and looking down saw a set of wooden stairs leading to a tiny dock below. Seeing the light and the potential picture in my mind, I turned and yelled to my crew to grab some gear, we're shooting a sunset shot!

I instructed our makeup artist, Michelle to please freshen Cora and to grab the men's white shirt

and the Valentino jacket we had photographed earlier. Then get her down to the tiny dock below as quickly as she could. I told my assistant to grab my Hensel Porty pack, the Hensel ring light and a second Hensel light for the Porty and meet me on the dock below.

For all you photographers out there who have ever attempted a sunset shot, chasing that light causes you the most anxiety you could ever feel as a photographer. I had made it down, checked the setting sun exposure, felt it was just right but still no model. Slow death by waiting for makeup… Yet, that is also so very important. But I was dying watching the light slowly begin to fade away before me.

Then, I heard them coming down the steep steps behind me. I yelled up to be very careful. Yet Cora made that trip down those steep stairs wearing her high heels! I nearly fell over when I saw that.

But there she was and she looked incredible.

Michelle had placed a silver wig on her which fit the scene perfectly. I used the ring light as her key light, then I had my assistant literally hang out over the water holding the second light for her edge light. We only got off a few frames but my gosh, as you can see, they turned out amazing. Oh, add the fact that just as I began to flash my strobes, the guy in the sailboat turned his lights on… perfect!

The other two photographs I love from our Bahamas trip are her leaning against the palm tree wearing the fedora while holding a cigar, also, just so wonderful. The man in the red jacket was another one of those, just happened to happen moments, at just the right time. It wasn't planned, but boy, did I love when he just appeared in the background. To me, it looked as if she had stepped from out of a James Bond film, so cool.

As you look through all these images, you can easily see why Cora was a favorite. From the incredibly stunning photos of her with the other model wearing the brightly colored lingerie in saturate color to all the other pictures I've shared, Cora's been what I would describe as one of my super models.

**Story & Photographs by**

**DAVID MECEY**

**Hair & Makeup by**

**@beautybymichellev**

STANIEL CAY YACHT CLUB

# King John

# U.S Presidents

## The Hidden Royal Connection

In the annals of American history, the 45 men (and 46 presidencies, counting Grover Cleveland's two non-consecutive terms) who have occupied the White House represent the pinnacle of democratic achievement. Yet beneath the surface of republican ideals lies a surprising web of genetic and genealogical connections that ties nearly all of them to one another–and to the very British monarchy the United States rebelled against in 1776. The most striking link? A vast majority trace their ancestry directly to King John of England, the monarch who signed the Magna Carta in 1215. This shared descent reveals how colonial elite bloodlines, limited immigration patterns, and centuries of intermarriage have woven the presidents into an extended family tree rooted in medieval European royalty. Far from conspiracy, this is documented genealogy, supported by historical records, family trees on platforms like Geni, Wiki-Tree, and researcher Timothy Dowling's datasets.

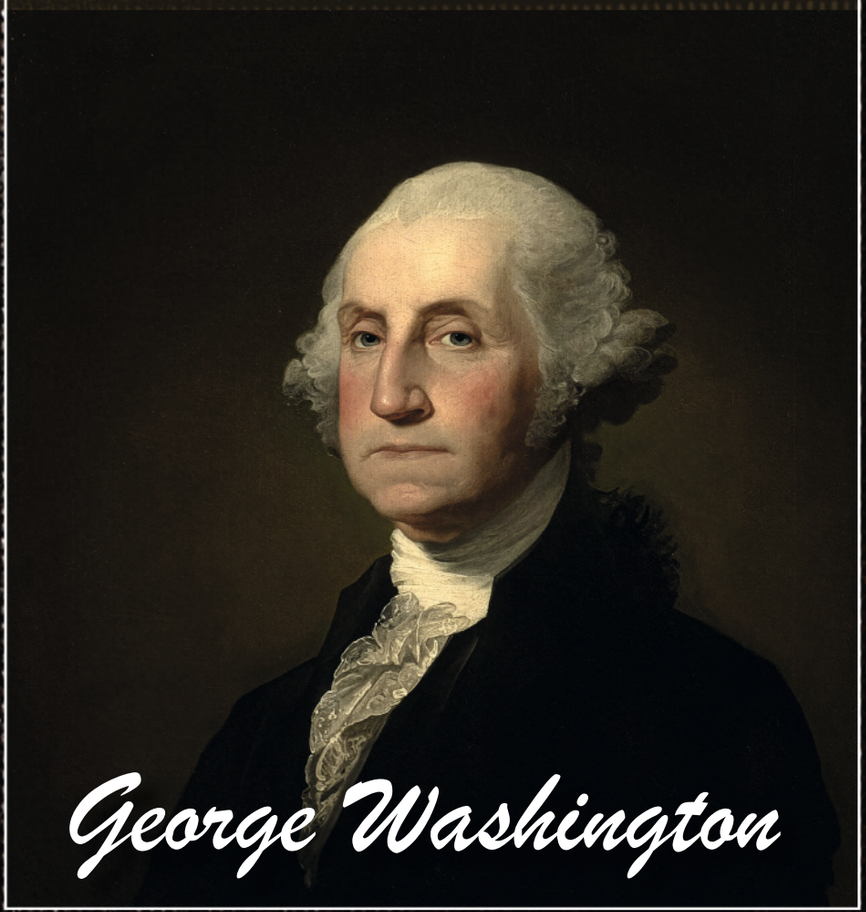
The claim gained widespread attention in 2012 when 12-year-old Bridge Anne d'Avignon of Salinas, California, constructed a family tree showing that 42 of the first 43 U.S. presidents (up to Barack Obama) were descendants of King John "Lackland." Only Martin Van Buren, the eighth president and the first of Dutch rather than British Isles descent, appeared as an outlier. Her work, aided by her grandfather and drawing on earlier research, was even displayed at the Library of Congress.

Subsequent analyses have refined and largely affirmed it. Dowling's comprehensive genealogy database links every president through King John, including Van Buren (as a nephew of a 23rd-generation descendant), Donald Trump, and Joe Biden. Cross-referenced with Geni and Wiki-Tree, the data shows consistent patterns: George Washington as a 17th-generation descendant, Thomas Jefferson an 18th, Abraham Lincoln a 20th, and more recent figures like Obama (25th–27th generation) and Biden (24th). While some entries carry uncertainties due to incomplete records, the convergence across independent sources makes the royal connection robust for nearly all 46 presidencies.

King John's DNA–diluted over 800 years–persists because of the mathematics of ancestry. In a population of a few million in medieval England, intermarriage among nobility ensured that royal lines proliferated. By the colonial era, many British immigrants to America carried these pedigrees, often undocumented at the time but traceable today through parish records, wills, and peerage rolls. King John (reigned 1199–1216), a Plantagenet, fathered legitimate and illegitimate lines that fed into later English royalty and gentry. His descendants include Edward I ("Longshanks," 1239–1307) and Edward III (1312–1377), both of whom appear frequently in presidential trees. Edward I alone is a forefather to at least 14 presidents, according to historical compilations.

By MARK THOMAS

Specific examples illustrate the depth of these ties. George Washington descended from Edward I through his great-great-grandfather George Reade, an immigrant to Virginia. Thomas Jefferson traced lines to Edward III and even earlier Scottish kings like David I. Abraham Lincoln was a direct descendant of Edward I via Burke's Presidential Families of the United States. John Quincy Adams linked back to Edward III through Elizabeth Coytmore Tyng, while Franklin D. Roosevelt shared multiple New England royal lines, including from Edward I, Edward III, and Henry I. New England presidents like John Quincy Adams, Franklin Pierce, Rutherford B. Hayes, Grover Cleveland, Benjamin Harrison, William Howard Taft, Calvin Coolidge, and FDR benefited from exceptionally well-documented colonial ancestries, with 115 known royal-descended immigrants to the region providing multiple pathways.



George Washington

Edward Ist

These royal connections extend beyond King John. Many presidents also descend from William the Conqueror (1066) and Alfred the Great, as noted in genealogical studies. Even outliers fit the pattern upon closer inspection: Van Buren's Dutch roots were once thought to sever the King John link, but updated trees confirm it. Dwight D. Eisenhower, with Pennsylvania Dutch and Swiss heritage, remains the only possible non-British Isles exception in broad ancestry, yet presidential genealogy often reveals hidden English lines. Barack Obama's maternal ancestry includes English, Scottish, Irish, and German roots with documented royal ties, despite his paternal Kenyan heritage. Donald Trump's Scottish and German lines similarly connect through colonial intermarriages.

Beyond monarchs, the presidents themselves form a tightly knit genetic cousin network. Shared colonial ancestors–often 17th–25th great-grandparents–make them distant relatives. George W. Bush and Barack Obama are 11th cousins once removed through these lines. Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin D. Roosevelt were fifth cousins. The two Adamses (father and son), two Harrisons, two Roosevelts, and two Bushes (father and son) demonstrate closer familial bonds. Overall, 44 of the presidents share blood relations through maternal or paternal colonial lines, a consequence of America's small founding population and endogamy among prominent families. Modern genomic models support this: Europeans share common ancestors from just 1,500 years ago, with most recent common ancestors (MRCAs) appearing far more recently than expected due to population bottlenecks.

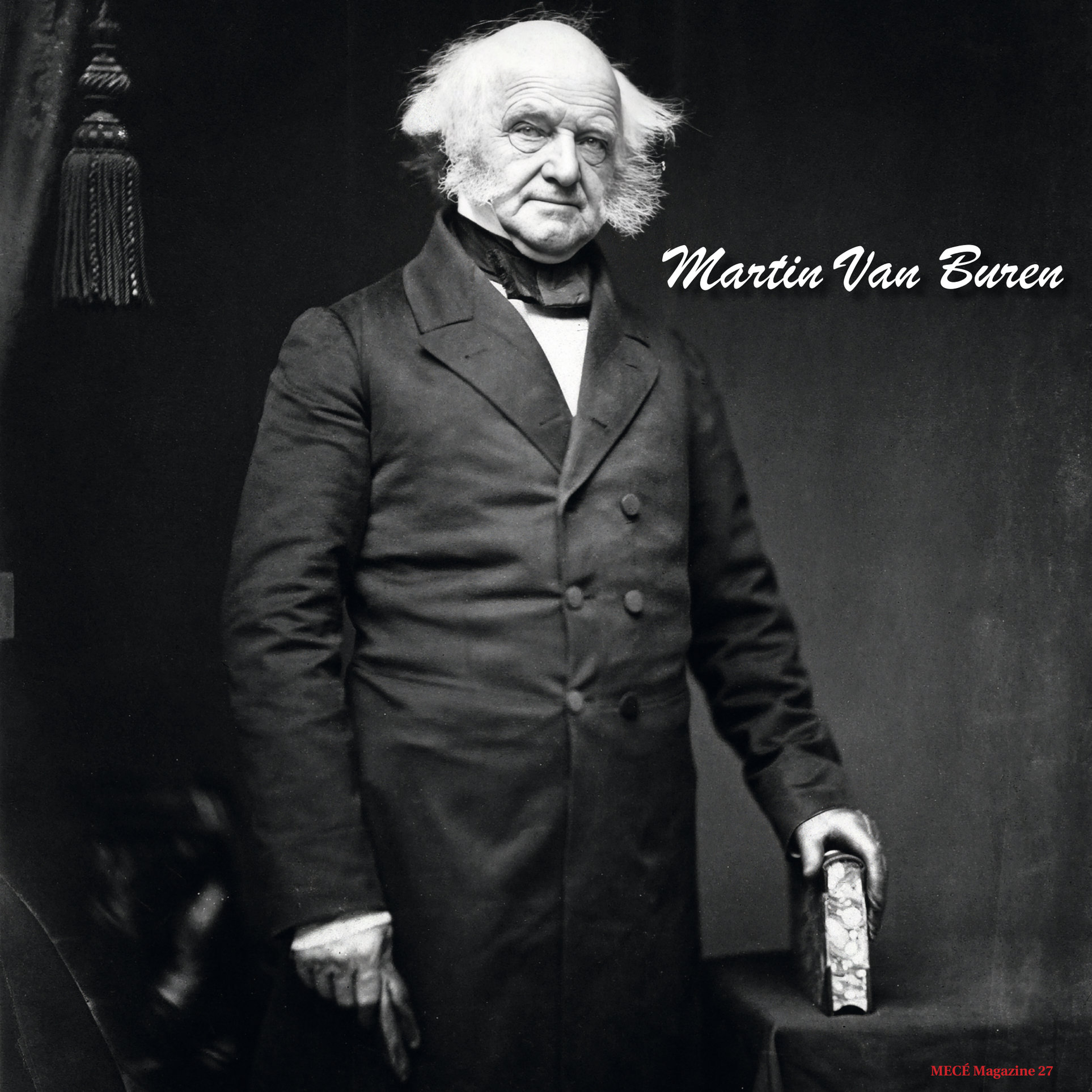
Why does this matter? It underscores the demographic realities of early America. English colonists, particularly those with gentry or noble ties, dominated leadership roles. Royal descent was not rare among them; millions of modern Americans likely carry similar lines if traced fully. Critics sometimes invoke "Most Royal Candidate" theories to suggest elite manipulation, but the data points to coincidence amplified by history rather than conspiracy.

No president has verified Indigenous American ancestry, and only Obama has non-European paternal roots–yet even his tree loops back to British royalty on his mother's side.

DNA testing in the genealogy boom has made these links more accessible. Projects like the Genographic Project and commercial tests confirm distant European royal ancestry for many with British Isles roots. However, the connections remain probabilistic at extreme distances; shared segments of DNA from King John would be negligible after 20+ generations. Still, the paper trail–births, marriages, land grants–provides compelling evidence.

In conclusion, the genetic tapestry linking U.S. presidents to British monarchs is not a flaw in the democratic experiment but a testament to human migration and kinship. From King John's turbulent reign to the Oval Office, these threads remind us that American exceptionalism emerged from, rather than erased, its European foundations.

Nearly every president carries this royal echo, proving that in the family tree of power, democracy and dynasty are more entangled than we often admit. As genealogy tools advance, future presidents will likely reveal even more connections–reminding us that history's bloodlines flow quietly beneath the surface of ballots and inaugurations.


Martin Van Buren

# Darren Motamedy

**Interview & Photographs**
**by**
**DAVID MECEY**

## Acclaimed Saxophone & Woodwind Musician

## Q&A - 7

**Hello Darren**, welcome to MECÉ!

Each month we interview a person of interest from various walks of life. We've interviewed some amazing individuals, stunt driver Tony Hunt from the movie, Ford vs Ferrari, country singers, pop singers, the incredible Murray the Magician, the extraordinary mayor of Las Vegas, Oscar Goodman, an 8-time Grammy Award-winning producer, an actor from the popular movie, Deadpool vs Wolverine, even a former Mobster. We love having you as another MECÉ subject!

We ask 7 questions (yet, there may be a few more here & there, we cheat) but we hope these "7" will allow you to offer our readers a sense of who you are… and please, feel free to write as much as you wish!

## 1 Where did you grow up, if not Las Vegas, what made you choose Las Vegas as the city to make your home?

I've lived a diverse life, beginning in Los Angeles in the early 60's. A series of tragic events led my family to move from Los Angeles to Taiwan from 1966 until 1969. I loved Taiwan, and that was my first introduction to instrumental music. From '69 until 2010 I lived in a suburb of Seattle Washington. That was when I became imbedded into the music world. In 2010 I made my move to Las Vegas for many reasons. I was the State of Washington Teacher of the Year in 2009, and due to budget cuts, I was released from my position. I had visited Las Vegas the previous year and decided it was time for a change. Thus, I ended up in the City of Lights and have loved the amazing weather and the opportunity to play with some of the top musicians in the world.

**2 You're a professional musician with reed instruments (Saxophones) your forte. Our founder early on was a musician, so this question comes from him. He said his answer to it would be; since he didn't seek becoming a musician, music found him. So, did you find music, or did music find you?**

This is a complicated question. And my answer today is certainly different than what I would have said even 5 years ago. Music really saved my life. I instantly became part of a "family" of artists, albeit 10-year-olds! Music was my salvation from a tumultuous family life. An opportunity to shine and be a little 10-year-old star. A chance to develop life-long friendships.

And certainly, a way to speak through my instruments in a way that my verbal skills could not match. Today, I would say that music is my meditation time. As a mature musician, I can say that I can express myself more eloquently since my skills have improved to a higher level. And I can honestly say that I have come to terms with the way I express myself musically. We are all unique creations, and I do believe that I am able to express peace and love through my music. I also believe that my Creator uses my creative musical voice to spread the word of love, kindness, unification and peace through the sound vibrations of my saxophone.

**3 As you continued to grow your music did you have any idols in the industry? Who were they and did you ever not only meet them, but work with them musically? With that, do you do any mentoring of promising musicians?**

I think all musicians are influenced by the previous generation of musicians. Music is a spoken story that is passed on from musician to musician. I totally respected the artistry of Dexter Gordon, Grover Washington Junior, the Jazz Crusaders, Ronnie Laws, and Kenny G. I met Dexter at a few of his concerts in Seattle, and I hear his influence in my playing. He taught me how to soar above the rhythm section behind him. Kenny G was a huge influence in my early playing, and I did many studio sessions with him in the Seattle area. I admired his amazing technique. He taught me how to be humble and respectful of other musicians. Ronnie Laws was a huge part of my musical life as I loved his fluency and unique saxophone sound. He and I are friends today, and we have played together at a few jazz festivals. To me, every artist that we listen to enter our ears, reside in our brain, and are expressed through our horns. I cherish all those that came before me.

I have mentored thousands of young musicians as I was a director of jazz studies in Seattle and Las Vegas. Some have taken a step into the professional world of music. My previous mentors taught me to use music as a vehicle to enhance one's life. One musician taught me to reinforce the positive aspects of a person's musical growth and focus on one or two aspects of where a young musician needs to improve upon along during their lifelong journey.

**4 During your early years, did you ever do the 'band' thing, that is, be a part of a jazz ensemble or stage band? Or have you always sought and worked a solo career from the beginning?**

Of course, we all did. I was in beginning band, advanced band, jazz band, pep band, concert band, symphonic band, music theory, class-piano, class-brass, orchestration, jazz arranging, and a wide array of shows passing through town. It's interesting consequently, how my venture into a solo career was shaped. And part of it was not pleasant. The music business can be just that….business….and have nothing to do with musicianship.

While working in Seattle I found that many of the shows and jazz bands were very clique 'ish. I suppose the same is true in any city. I was pushed into a solo career because I didn't get hired for a lot of shows. I decided to write my own music, and to produce my own sounds. I decided to "be in charge of my own musical life" instead of waiting for the phone to ring. That decision to be a solo artist has allowed me to continue music on a daily basis. I'm in charge of me. I make decisions for myself of when, where, and who to play with. Hundreds of music clubs have closed. I'm still playing. Bands change personnel and musicians get fired. I'm still playing. Covid! I'm still playing.

Having a solo career is the best way to become known in the music industry. Who played trombone in Ray Charles' band? Who knows?!?! Or 2nd alto in Count Basie's band? Who knows. Being a soloist, although a challenging career choice, really allows me to write and play and tour with whoever I want. Because I'm the boss of me….…well….except for my wife….

**5 Being in Vegas, not that far from LA, was studio work ever a part of your repertoire, if so, did you, or do you still do any of those sorts of gigs today?**

I don't really do work in L.A. There are plenty of musicians there to cover that. I do however record quite a bit in my Las Vegas Studio. People constantly send me projects to perform saxophone on. I really enjoy that, and I'm lucky that I have an excellent studio in my home to share my musicality on other peoples' projects.

**6 Our founder is quite proud of the fact during his high school & college years he owns and played a Getzen/Severinsen model trumpet due to its rich sound for jazz. You play an assortment of reed instruments. What are the various types you own, and do you prefer a certain maker for all, or is it based solely on the sound each makes to your ears? And in that sound, is it based on the instrument itself, the mouthpiece, or a combination?**

I prefer Keilwerth Saxophones made in Germany. I play Alto and Tenor Keilwerth Saxophone and a Selmer MKVI Soprano Sax. I chose the Keilwerths because that is what my hero Grover Washington Junior performed on. Nobody can sound like Grover. Nobody can sound like me.  Just because I perform on Grovers' setup doesn't mean I'll sound like him. What makes everyone's sound unique? The size of our heads, the reeds, the saxophone, the mouthpieces, the neck, the weather, the music that we listen to, our personal demeanor on any particular day. All those items affect how we sound. I embrace my saxophone sound and embrace who I am.

**7 Our founder and his Creative Director met you while you were playing at Tres Cazuelas, the Latin restaurant here in Summerlin, Las Vegas. Where are some of the other venues you play and where can people find your appearance dates?**

My website www.darrenmotamedy.com shows my musical schedule. I perform all over, from Las Vegas to Seattle, Mexico, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and even Norway. I do perform a lot in Las Vegas with people like Tito Puente', Donny Osmond, and a plethora of people at Delilah in the Wynn hotel. Many people tell me that I'm too good to play in small venues. I totally disagree. Do you think boxers are always in the center ring? Or NFL football stars always are playing in front of hundreds of thousands of fans? I play in smaller venues so I can work on my technique and learn new material. I also find it a way to meditate and allow my brain to relax while I watch my fingers move. Certainly, playing in smaller venues allow me to take musical chances and keep on top of my game. That way, when I do perform at Jazz Festivals, I'm in tip top shape!!!

Photographed by
DAVID MECEY

Hair & Makeup by
LADONNA STEIN

# July MODEL in the Middle

# SAVANNAH STREBOR

Savannah is quite a special MODEL in the Middle for MECÉ. The reason, she's the only MITM who has been photographed with an audience watching the entire process. Yes, Savannah was the model our founder chose to be observed being photographed for her layout during one of his workshops. It happened in Dallas, Texas, only two months ago. She did a stellar job especially with all the pressure having a dozen people watching everything she and David did that day.

David came away saying she's an incredible talent beyond the fact being gorgeous, sexy, and a great mover. She owns tremendous confidence which allowed her to block out all that was around her to be 'the model' for David. It was a very special event and one that may never be offered again. So, to those who made the program, kudos, as you may be the only ones to watch David 'do his thing', no questions asked.

Savannah is special again as she, as is David our founder, both native Texans. Even coming from a town, Tyler, only a 40-minute drive from David's hometown of Longview, Texas. Yes, it was a treat for David to be able to photograph someone from so close to home and make her both the cover and the middle of his magazine.

We asked Savannah a few questions, so we feel it best to allow her to tell her story. Savannah, the floor is yours…

I got into modeling completely by accident. Like most questionable life decisions, it started with someone saying, “You should let me photograph you,” and me having absolutely no business agreeing to it. At first, I was convinced everyone else knew exactly what they were doing while I was just trying to figure out where my hands were supposed to go. The funny thing is that I still occasionally have that thought.

It started feeling real when people I didn’t know began recognizing my work and when I started seeing my images published. There was a moment where I realized, “Oh no… people actually expect me to know what I’m doing now.”

What keeps me interested, for those few hours, modeling lets me step into different versions of myself. I’ve lived enough lives outside of modeling to appreciate that. I’ve started over, changed directions, moved across oceans, moved back, succeeded, failed, and reinvented myself more than once. Modeling is one of the few places where all those versions of me get to exist at the same time. When I step in front of the camera, I don’t think I’m becoming someone else. I think I’m becoming a more concentrated version of myself.

Modeling gives me permission to take all the different pieces of who I am… the dreamer, the adventurer, the artist, and put them in one frame. I've lived a lot of lives for one person.

I've moved across oceans, started over from scratch, fallen in love, been married, gotten divorced, built careers, changed directions, and somehow found my way back to myself each time. Every experience left something behind, and I think the camera captures little pieces of all of them. The woman in my photographs is confident, but she's also curious. She's resilient. She's a little stubborn. She's hopeful even when she probably shouldn't be. If I have a persona, it's simply the version of me that's brave enough to be seen.

To me, a successful photo shoot is surprisingly similar to a successful first date. Everybody shows up on time, nobody lies about what they're bringing to the table, communication is clear, expectations are realistic, and everyone leaves feeling better than when they arrived. I've done enough shoots to know that the best photos rarely come from the fanciest locations or the biggest budgets. They come from people who are having a good time and trust each other enough to try something stupid. If a photographer can make me forget that I'm standing in a field dressed in my bra and panties while strangers drive by staring, we're probably going to get good photos.

At the end of the day, if the team laughed, the photos were strong, and nobody needed an emergency fake phone call to leave early, I'd call it a success.

I do seem to have a few hidden talents that most overlook. I have an unusual ability to collect highly specific knowledge that has no practical use in everyday conversation.

I can tell you how to care for a chinchilla, why most rabbit cages are too small, the history of a sewing machine built before World War II, and exactly which animal in my house is causing trouble based solely on the sound coming from another room. I also have a talent for turning simple hobbies into full-blown lifestyle commitments.

Most people buy a sewing machine. I joined guilds, attend retreats, collect vintage machines, and somehow ended up being called part of the next generation of quilting.

One of the biggest misconceptions about me is probably how modeling is my whole personality. Modeling is just one chapter in a very strange book. If you ask me about quilting, animal rescue, sewing machines, or one of my fourteen ongoing projects, you'll quickly realize my life makes a lot less sense than do my photos. I also spend an unreasonable amount of time trying to undo the damage caused by big pet stores convincing people that rabbits belong in cages the size of shoeboxes and that guinea pigs think enrichment is staring at a plastic food bowl all day. If you've ever accidentally asked me an animal care question, congratulations you've just signed up for a 45-minute TED Talk.

Honestly, modeling is probably the least confusing part of my life. Let me share with you a bit about my 'daily' life. When I'm not in front of the camera, I'm usually causing some level of chaos.

## July 2026 MODEL in the Middle - Savannah Strebor

My life revolves around animals, sewing, and whatever random hobby I've convinced myself I absolutely need to start. My house is basically a rescue facility disguised as a home. Between my rabbit, guinea pigs, chinchilla, dog, cats, hamsters, and the occasional foster animal, there's always somebody demanding vegetables, attention, or both.

I spend a lot of my free time quilting, collecting vintage sewing machines, attending quilt guild meetings, volunteering with animal rescue, and taking road trips. Most evenings involve animal cuddles, fabric shopping I don't need, and a project that should have taken a weekend somehow turning into a three-month commitment. I've learned that the things that bring me the most joy are usually the least glamorous. The photos are real, but so is me covered in hay, animal fur, and thread five minutes later.

The best piece of advice I've ever received was, "Your problems know your address." I spent a lot of my younger years thinking a new city, a new job, a new relationship, or even a new country would somehow fix everything. So, I moved to a Caribbean island and learned that your problems are fully capable of obtaining a passport. That lesson changed my life. Running away feels productive because you're moving, but eventually you realize growth and distance aren't the same thing. Sometimes the bravest thing you can do is stay put and deal with your mess.

After sharing that, let me say the best place I've ever traveled to is St. Martin. Most people go there on vacation. I somehow turned it into a life experience. I lived on the Dutch side of the island long enough to gain residency, collect a lifetime's worth of stories, and learn that your problems are perfectly capable of obtaining a passport. Looking back, it was one of the hardest and most important chapters of my life. The island is beautiful, but what I remember most are the people. Living somewhere that small forces you to slow down, get to know your neighbors, and realize that life isn't always about rushing to the next thing. St. Martin chewed me up in two different languages and sent me back to Texas with a lot less certainty and a lot more wisdom. I'd still go back tomorrow.

As for where I'd like to travel next, Scotland. I feel like I've graduated from beaches and earned a season of castles, history, and bad weather.

If I were ever offered the chance to hang out with anyone either living or passed it would have to be my grandmother. I've spent enough time around famous people to know I'd probably end up asking them weird questions anyway, so I'd rather spend the day with someone whose stories belong to me.

I'd want to know everything. The family gossip. The mistakes. The heartbreaks. The decisions she regretted. The decisions she didn't. Most importantly, I'd want to know if she spent her twenties feeling like she had no idea what she was doing, because that information would have been incredibly useful to me. I think people underestimate how much wisdom disappears when someone passes away. I'd give just about anything for one more afternoon of questions.

In closing, the collaborations I remember most are the ones where someone took a chance on me before I had earned it. I've had photographers invite me to shoot when I had no portfolio, no experience, and honestly no business being there. Somehow, they saw something worth investing their time in anyway. Those are the people I remember.

Not because of the photos, but because they helped build the confidence that came after. It's a strange feeling when someone believes in you before you've fully figured out how to believe in yourself. A lot of the opportunities I've had started because someone opened a door and said, "Come on in." I've never forgotten that.

Well Savannah, we opened the door for you to MECÉ, and we are so happy you walked in. You as our July MODEL in the Middle, the month of our nation's 250th Anniversary, is beyond special and so exciting!

Welcome to MECÉ!

# How It Was Done

## *Photographing :* SAVANNAH STREBOR

*- With an Audience!*

By
DAVID MECEY

Our July MODEL in the Middle, Ms. Savannah Strebor is a rather special MITM, beyond just being beautiful and sexy. The reason, she was not just photographed to appear as the centerfold and cover of our magazine but was done so during one of our founder's workshops! Yes, her photo shoot took place during David Mecey's Workshop Experience that happened in Dallas, Texas, this past May. Which meant his attendees were present to watch the entire process of what it takes to produce a feature for MECÉ, from start to finish.

Savannah was utterly fantastic. Though we can tell you David was even nervous himself, you can rest assured, so was Savannah. But they both seemed to hide their fears quite well, as no one seemed to realize it, thankfully.

We must hand it to Savannah though; she handled the entire process with aplomb. As we like to say, she owned it, and since David had a bit of a "moment" himself (more on that) they both somehow kept the day calm and collected.

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The entire group arrived at the fantastic home location in the Turtle Creek area of Dallas just after lunchtime. There were nine attendees with Ric Moore, David's former Playboy assistant there, then Tim Bennett, one of MECE's contributing photographers and now Associate Photo Director also there to help keep things on schedule.

David, along with Art & Design Director, Autumn Huse had driven to Dallas from Las Vegas so David could bring all his photo gear. He described it as bringing everything, including the kitchen sink, to make sure he had what he needed to show how he does covers, a centerfold and pictorial for the magazine. What he did not anticipate though, was he had forgot "the kitchen sink"!

Yes, even with his checks and re-checks of gear before leaving, somehow, he had inadvertently left behind one of his most precious lights, his Hensel ring light. He had brought the power pack, its two batteries, the battery charger, etc., but as he began setting up, no ring light could be found anywhere. Then, an old friend stepped up to save the day.

When Ric heard David was missing his ring light he went over to him and said, you know, I have that same Hensel ring light myself, and you're welcome to it. What a save that was, for it was what David had planned to use as a large part of the photo shoots for his program.

His plan was to use several different lighting schemes to show the variety of lighting setups he often uses for the magazine's photo shoots for its models. His idea; to have the attendees be there and watch how he did his setups was all part of the workshop plan from the very beginning. So, having all his "instruments" he uses to accomplish that needed to be there. Now, with Ric's help, he would have it. But during those minutes of searching for his ring light and not finding it, let's just say David's anxiety meter must have pegged in the red! Yet, he never revealed it, but internally, he must have been breathing pretty darn hard.

While Ric ran back to his studio to fetch his light, David began the photo shoot by setting up to do some cover shots of Savannah. He always attempts to start with cover photos since they are done with strategically placed wardrobe to create a sexy image, while also making sure no 'naughty bits' are showing to camera.

One of the wardrobe pieces Savannah had brought along was a white dress. It was light and airy, very low cut both front and back and had slits for her legs. Let's just say it left little to the imagination which was exactly what David had in mind for a strong cover shot.

Due to the size of the house and the depth behind her position on the sofa, David ended up using something like six lights. In fact, six lights were most of the norm for many of the shots that day.

For her key light he used a small strip light, camera right. Underneath it, he placed an open head on the floor under a small ottoman, shooting through its legs. This worked to give a slight highlight on her lower legs while the ottoman also served as a flag preventing the light from striking her higher up on her body.

He placed one of his tiny Godox lights on top of the piano as an edge light there, another light outside one of the French doors shooting through it as if sunlight striking her from camera left. Then his small ring light on the floor in the next room behind her striking the pool table to give it a highlight.

Then another light in that same room bounced off the ceiling to give it a fill light much like the sun would do from all the windows there. Finally, another tiny Godox light on a light stand from inside the next room from camera right beyond the pool table. This would be another edge light on Savannah from back, camera right.

After David felt he had accomplished his cover shots, this same lighting setup would be a similar one for the next situation, one where David wanted Savannah in standing poses. To take advantage of his lights already in the next room, he had Savannah move back slightly to be next to the piano but now standing. It was here where she shined, as she is an incredible mover especially doing standing poses.

His lighting was kept somewhat similar, keeping the strip light as her key, the floor light as a slight highlight, but only on her lower leg, then keeping the tiny Godox light as a highlight on her stomach and chest. He also kept the small Godox ring light on the floor just behind her position to give some light to the pool table and floor. A 600-watt light back in the corner bounced off the ceiling as an overall fill light, while keeping the tiny Godox light at camera right as another edge light. Though David felt many of Savannah's standing poses could have been her centerfold, it was after they moved into the pool room that he felt he got the shot he wanted for the middle of MECÉ.

By the time they had moved into the pool room Ric had arrived with his ring light. David set the ring as her key light with it placed on a ‘C’ stand with him shooting through it in the traditional manner. He moved his small Godox ring light to be under the pool table at the far end as the sunlight striking the floor under the table. He placed two lights on the left side of the room, one near, one far to bounce off the ceiling as a general fill light. This would be to make the room appear to be lit by the sun coming through all the windows. Those would also create very nice highlights on Savannah’s chest and arms. This room would have the fewest lights used that day, only having four for the last series of pictures for her pictorial.

What this shoot did, beyond achieving another wonderful series of photographs of a MECÉ MODEL in the Middle, it showed the attendees what a photo shoot was like for a client. Though the client being David's own magazine, he has placed upon it the highest standards for the quality of the images that appear in its pages. So, they not only saw the pressure it created due to that, but how sometimes, even with the best of planning something can go wrong. But instead of throwing in the towel, finding a way around it and getting the job done.

Ric Moore even said that to the photographers upon his return. He told them that the reality of a photo shoot was that something, almost always something, could become a 'fly in the ointment'. Then as a pro, you simply had to work around it. While still maintaining the quality you always achieved, no matter. That this was a great example of what goes on. When you're not just shooting to achieve one 'nice' picture, but creating covers, a centerfold and lots of publishable images to fill the pages of a layout showing a model at her best. This is how it's done, what a great way to show that too.

Though David would later say, the day would have been a lot longer had Ric not had that light. Yet the fact that moment happened to David and how he still made the photo shoot work, is what a pro does. That's what a pro's life is all about in this business, with this one just one more example of the many similar moments he's faced throughout his long career.

If there's a challenge, you meet it head on and move through it or around it. But you get it done. Mission accomplished, with Ric, as he had done in those early days he and David worked together, helped him do that very thing one more time.

- Tiffany Taylor -

**1 From TR**

**I've lived a full life, but it has been one that's been very selfish. I was blessed with a perfect wife when I was younger, but I ruined the marriage by cheating. I got caught in the Madonna/whore thing and let my desires take over. It's been decades since my marriage ended, but I still feel so guilty and am so miserable. I feel like I messed up my life in so many ways and now I'm just alone and depressed. Is there any salvation for me?**

There is always hope for all of us. None of us are perfect, but we can go forward and try to be the best people we can be each day. Guilt and shame are a big burden so many people carry, but it doesn't have to control our lives and can be set down. It's just a choice that must be made. It's good to be aware of mistakes or wrong doings, but the key is to learn from them and make better choices going forward. Each of us must decide if we are going to let ourselves off the hook for our mistakes, learn from them and do better going forward or keep beating ourselves up forever. I've seen shame and regret poison people and they let it take over and influence their decisions, so they keep reinforcing that they are "bad" by making unhealthy choices in life. For you, I'd suggest you give yourself some grace, apologize to your ex, if possible, remember you are human and start each new day trying to make the best decisions you can. Part of the human condition is learning and growing. Lean into that and see if you can create some situations to be proud of. It can be something as simple as checking in on a friend or helping a neighbor. You also might want to seek out some counseling in case you are dealing with depression and need some assistance with that.

# Asking For a Friend…

**2 From S**

**A friend of mine of many years (we are retired seniors) just confessed to me that he has a very bad opiate and cocaine problem. He's depressed and having a tough time with how his life turned out. I want to help him, but I don't know how. He doesn't want to stop the drugs and just says he's waiting to die. What do I do?**

That is a heavy situation to deal with. It might be possible that he is looking for help because he told you what he is doing. So many people hide drug abuse out of shame, so it is probably a good sign he trusts you with that information. You can't make anyone stop abusing a substance if they don't want to, so you are left with a few options. First, I'd try to communicate to your friend regularly that you are there for them, don't judge, but want to be a support system for them . I'd visit your friend in person as soon as you can. He might need some human contact and connection if he is depressed. That can go a long way. You can also educate yourself online about options for your friend if he should decide to stop using and how you can help. There are lots of good programs out there. Sometimes people mask their pain with substances, and some basic human kindness and support can go a long way. You have zero control over what your friend does, so at the end of the day all you can do is be the best friend you can be and search for ways to help in the moment like getting your friend out for an activity if that is possible. It might be hard to see your friend struggle but if you keep showing up for him at least, he knows someone cares. On a basic human level isn't just showing up and being there for someone valuable? We can't fix everything that is wrong for everyone so just do what you can do.

## 3

**From MJ**
**I really love music and going to concerts. The problem is I'm older and single, so I don't always have friends to go with and feel self-conscious going to some shows at my age. Do you think it is lame to go to shows by myself especially if I'm "old"?**

Age is just a number and if you like to enjoy a live show, I say go for it even if you must go alone. Don't miss out on an experience like great live music if you have a chance to go. You never know you might meet someone and make a friend. Besides, lots of people go do activities they like alone. There isn't anything wrong with it. You could also check out online singles groups that do activities together like concerts. There seems to be a group for everything today online.

## 4

**From N**
**I'm really into being dominated in bed but it's hard to find women that can figure this out when we hook up. I try different moves to try to get them to do some things I like but it doesn't work. What do I do?**

Women have a lot of good qualities, but mind reading isn't usually one of them. If you want something specific during sex you must communicate it beforehand. Next time you are with a partner I'd suggest bringing it up before things go too far and explain what it is you want and how far you want the person to go. Especially with anything in the BDSM world, you need to establish clear boundaries ahead of time. There are a lot of books on the topic on Amazon. I suggest you check them out. With any type of sexual desire, you need to communicate it. Hinting isn't going to work most of time and besides you have nothing to be ashamed of or embarrassed about. People like what they like. If you are too embarrassed to have a face-to-face conversation you can always text or email with photos and videos of whatever you'd like done and just write, "do this". Having a real conversation is much better though and can avoid a lot of confusion and problems.

**5 From P**

**My wife is going thru menopause or whatever and is so miserable. It's making my life hard and also, I feel bad for her. Is there anything I can do to help make things better so both of us can have a happier life? Is there a pill to fix it?**

Women's health has gone thru some changes recently. Medications that help with perimenopause and menopause have been cleared to be safe after decades of being labeled as dangerous. I'm not a doctor but I do know there are options out there that can help your wife feel better. Maybe half of the testing and medications that can help are covered by insurance if you are in the USA, so be prepared for at least some out of pocket costs. I'd speak with your wife, ask if she'd like some help feeling better. Also let her know you love her and want her to feel her best and are there to support her. Try to keep conversations positive, supportive and about her. If she's open to help, you can do some online searches for medical practices that specialize in hormone replacement therapy. It might take a little time to find someone who really understands hormones and reading labs, but it is doable. Otherwise go buy her a few portable air conditioning units and find a hobby outside of the house for a few years. Good luck!

**6 From C**

**I have a friend that has had a crazy string of bad luck and went from being a very proactive, successful person to disabled and broke due to no fault of their own. My friend was always generous with everything and everyone in her life. I'd like to help her, but I don't know what would help or how much to do. What is reasonable in this situation?**

It is wonderful that you want to help your friend. I'd start by talking with her and seeing what her needs are. Maybe you could provide support in non-monetary ways like helping with paperwork and chores. Simple things like doing a grocery store run can be very helpful. You mentioned your friend is disabled, see if she needs help getting assistance from the state. When people are injured or very ill it can be hard just to get the smallest chore or task done, so you could always help with the tasks that she finds overwhelming or difficult. Just start with a conversation and ask what would be most beneficial. If you choose to give financially, I'd make sure you are clear with yourself and your friend about the terms of what you are giving. Is it a loan or a gift? Anytime money gets involved it can cause issues, so I'd be clear what it is. If you just want to help financially, it's a lot easier to give it as a gift and if your friend makes a recovery and repays you then it's a bonus.

# Jennifer Palmer

Another model from our founder's vast talent list is Jennifer Palmer. She was born in October telling us she's a true Scorpio. She grew up on an island in Michigan where the winters were brutal. After growing up in that climate she wanted to travel, especially to where it was warm and where there were beaches with lots of water. So, she decided that swimsuit modeling was her way to get there.

In the early '90s she entered the Venus Swimwear competition finishing high up in the ranks. To her that meant it was definitely the right fit. It wasn't long after she made her move to LA in pursuit of acting and modeling. It was exactly what she wanted.

When asked what's something people assume about her that's completely wrong her answer was awesome and fitting. She said that people all think her boobs are fake, with a laugh. "No, they are quite real as you will be able to see in David's photographs here, I'm sure." Also, that people assume because you're a model, you're not that bright while also being vain or conceited. Nothing could be further from the truth. Due to her Midwest upbringing she was brought up to be humble, respectful of others, and was even very shy as a kid. As for the not being very bright, she added she graduated college with a 3.94 gpa.

Another trait she wanted us to know about is her ability of having a near photographic memory. Plus, the trait nearly all our models seem to have, travel. Her favorite places include Mykonos, Greece, St. Tropez, France, and Marbella, Ibiza Spain. She adds she loves going anywhere it's tropical and near an ocean.

**Photographed by**

**DAVID MECEY**

**Makeup & Hair by**

**@beautybymichellev**

She had a costume design business when she lived in LA (not long ago, she left California now makes Texas her home) creating one-of-a-kind designs. She started that business after designing her own costume she wore to the Playboy mansion at one of their Midsummer Night's Dream parties. We need to add that yes, Jennifer was also a Playboy bunny for a while, but that was working at one of the Playboy clubs, not for the magazine.

When asked how and when she met our founder that was quite the story as it began early on in her career and has remained a long-standing friendship due to it.

They first met during her Venus International competition in the early 90s where she worked with him on the beach in Clearwater Beach, Florida. She even considered it her first 'real' photo shoot. She was nervous but added that David was so welcoming and had such a calm presence it helped to make her feel relaxed and comfortable in front of the camera. In fact, her looking back at it now says it's probably the reason she wanted to start modeling full time.

They met up again after she had moved to LA and was working as a Playboy bunny in '99. She said; "after modeling in LA for about a year the word among the models was that they all wanted to work with David Mecey. That his photographs made models look beautiful and at their best.

Even models that never considered posing nude wanted to test for Playboy just to shoot with him! Personally, I feel he's a bigger deal than he thinks he is!"

Now that her modeling and acting are behind her and since her move to Texas, she's taken up a hobby that's become a new near-profession. She's now spending her days taking ballroom and Latin dance classes then competing in International Ballroom Dance competitions. That's been her life for the past two years and feels it's only going to continue as she absolutely loves it. It allows her to do her favorite things; performing for the camera, dancing, traveling, and designing her own costumes.

That's what it's all about Jennifer, so enjoy it, and welcome to MECÉ, David's magazine.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID MECEY

# LOVING LOOK...

## You Never Know What You'll Find

Going back through the annals of my years at Playboy I do have quite a few memories which mark various and amazing moments in my life. Many of those moments were finding Playmates. And to be exact, 24 of them. But also, how on occasion, I crashed and burned.

I do feel that one of the more stand out traits I possessed that Playboy recognized, was my willingness to approach beautiful women and present them with the opportunity to become a Playmate. And do so with reckless abandon.

Due to my small-town roots and naiveté, as much as anything, when approaching women (seriously, I was a shy guy growing up, though no one would believe it today), I think the fact I was seeking them out for the Bunny rather than for myself was my best asset. If you can call it, an asset.

Honestly, I was turned down way more times than accepted, just a FYI. One of those times that stands out was by a young woman I approached while attending the F1 race that was held in Detroit, Michigan back in, I believe, 1982. She was tall, tan, lean, leggy, with blue eyes, long tousled black hair, and from the tank top she was wearing an incredible natural chest. Add also the face of a super model. What I saw was Playmate of the Year!

**By**
**DAVID MECEY**

Wearing shorts and that first mentioned tank top, without a bra, she filled it out extremely well. I spotted her from near football field away walking toward me. It was as I was moving to one of the corner stations where one could very nearly touch the cars as they went by (yeah, back in those days you could get so close to the track it was freaking amazing!) I simply had to stop her and ask her if she would be interested in testing.

She walked right by me as I was scrambling to find a business card in my pocket. In my mind the ammunition I needed in hopes of gaining her attention. Finding a card I quickly walked past her a good distance, casually turned and pretended to just notice her as she approached.

As she walked past, I pardoned myself and asked if she was a model, but she didn't respond. I asked again, which caused her to finally slow up a bit to answer me, with a strong no, but was now at least stopped and looking at me. I walked to her. As I handed her my card I told her I was a staff photographer for the magazine continuing to say how she should contact Playboy. To say she had met me, and it was I who told her to do so. She looked down at my card, then up to me.

'No thanks, not interested'. Then turned and walked away without another word (Yes, but she kept the card. My guess, to gloat over the fact she had been asked and how she turned it down).

Yeah, I was stunned and felt as if I had just been literally tossed to the curb. But it happened like that sometimes, normally not quite that badly, but not every woman wanted to be in Playboy. Now let me tell you about one that didn't 'walk away'.

Being stationed in the Chicago office, most all the girls or people in general would submit their photos there. Many did not even know the LA office existed, since it was more photo studio than office.

It was the conveyor belt for producing Playmate gatefolds whereas Chicago was the conduit to the girls. One day the receptionist came into my office all excited. She had been tasked with the responsibility of opening all the letters from people who 'thought' they had a Playmate living next door. She handed me a few envelopes with a few snapshots of girls asking me if I thought any might be a Playmate. One struck me, a very pretty blonde, wearing orange hot pants and a white, low-cut tank top with the word, Hooters, printed on it.

Indeed, this young woman was quite pretty and def had what appeared to be a smoking body. I read the letter attached, which was from one of the owners of this new franchise down in Florida, called Hooters. They were in Tampa and felt their billboard model/waitress was a sure-fire Playmate. Would we consider her?

I took the photos into Gary's (Cole) office to share her with him and get his thoughts. He liked her and said for me to investigate it further. That meant calling the guy who submitted her pictures. During the call he invited me down to visit, to see this new restaurant, Hooters, and meet this beauty. So, I did!

With the blessing of the magazine, I took off to Florida where I would spend a few days searching for Playmates in Tampa. While there, I went by this Hooters joint and had a chat with that owner. Turns out he had submitted her without her knowledge and was going to leave it up to me to 'give her the news' that Playboy was interested! Great…

Well, it was not an easy task as Lynne was then and has always been a feisty young woman (In a fun, crazy way that is) So, it was not so much about convincing her as much as just making her feel comfortable with the whole idea of being a Playmate. She had no real problem with the nudity, and yet wasn't all that thrilled about everyone seeing her naked either.

**PLAYBOY ENTERPRISES, INC.**

Nov. 3, 1983

Edward C. Droste
Provident Management Corporation
[redacted]
Largo, Florida 33541

Dear Mr. Droste,

The literature which you submitted to PLAYBOY, was brought to my attention because of the photos of the young lady that accompanied your material. I was curious as to whether she would be interested in PLAYBOY. We are constantly searching for pretty women to be Playmates for the magazine. Being a Playmate holds a lot of rewards, besides the $15,000 modeling fee, that most women aren't really aware. If she is interested, she can reach me at PLAYBOY, toll-free, at 1(800) 621-4105, ext. 2373, Mon. - Fri. I do hope she will at least give a call. In regards to your restaurant, I have no control over content of the magazine (editorially), but I will show the information you sent to my editors. There is something, though, a few Restaurant-Clubs around the country have done in the past, you might consider. They have held "Most Physical" contests, bikini contests, etc., and have secured a representative from PLAYBOY to be there as a judge. I have done this on several occasions, myself. Anyway, I wish you much luck with you venture in the Tampa-area. The next time I'm in Clearwater, I will be sure to drop in for dinner. Thanks for thinking of PLAYBOY.

Sincerely,

David Mecey

David Mecey
Staff Photographer
PLAYBOY

MECÉ Magazine 81

**PLAYBOY ENTERPRISES, INC.**

January 19, 1984

Mr. Edward C. Droste, President
Provident Management Corporation
[redacted]
Clearwater, Florida 33546

Dear Edward:

I received your letter and Lynne Austin's composite. Thanks for sending them. I've been on the road quite a bit since we last spoke. I'm sorry about the lack of correspondence. I do still want to pop down to Tampa soon, but as of now, my own time is still up in the air. It looks like it might be around the 2nd week of Feburary that I might try to come down. This would be a good time for me because it's around my birthday, and, I need a vacation from this intense cold here.

When we last spoke, you memtioned you had a place where I might stay when I drop in. If that's still no problem for you, it would be greatly appreciated. I'm working on a couple of projects right now, but as soon as I can see some breathing room, I'll be in touch to give you a definite date for a visit. Again, thanks for you enthusiasm, and please let Lynne know I'm looking forward to meeting her in the near future. By-the-way there's a photo of me, and a lot of my work in the current Feburary issue. Give a look!

Sincerely,

David Mecey
Staff Photographer
PLAYBOY MAGAZINE

But we hit it off, became friends and she flew to Chicago for a test.

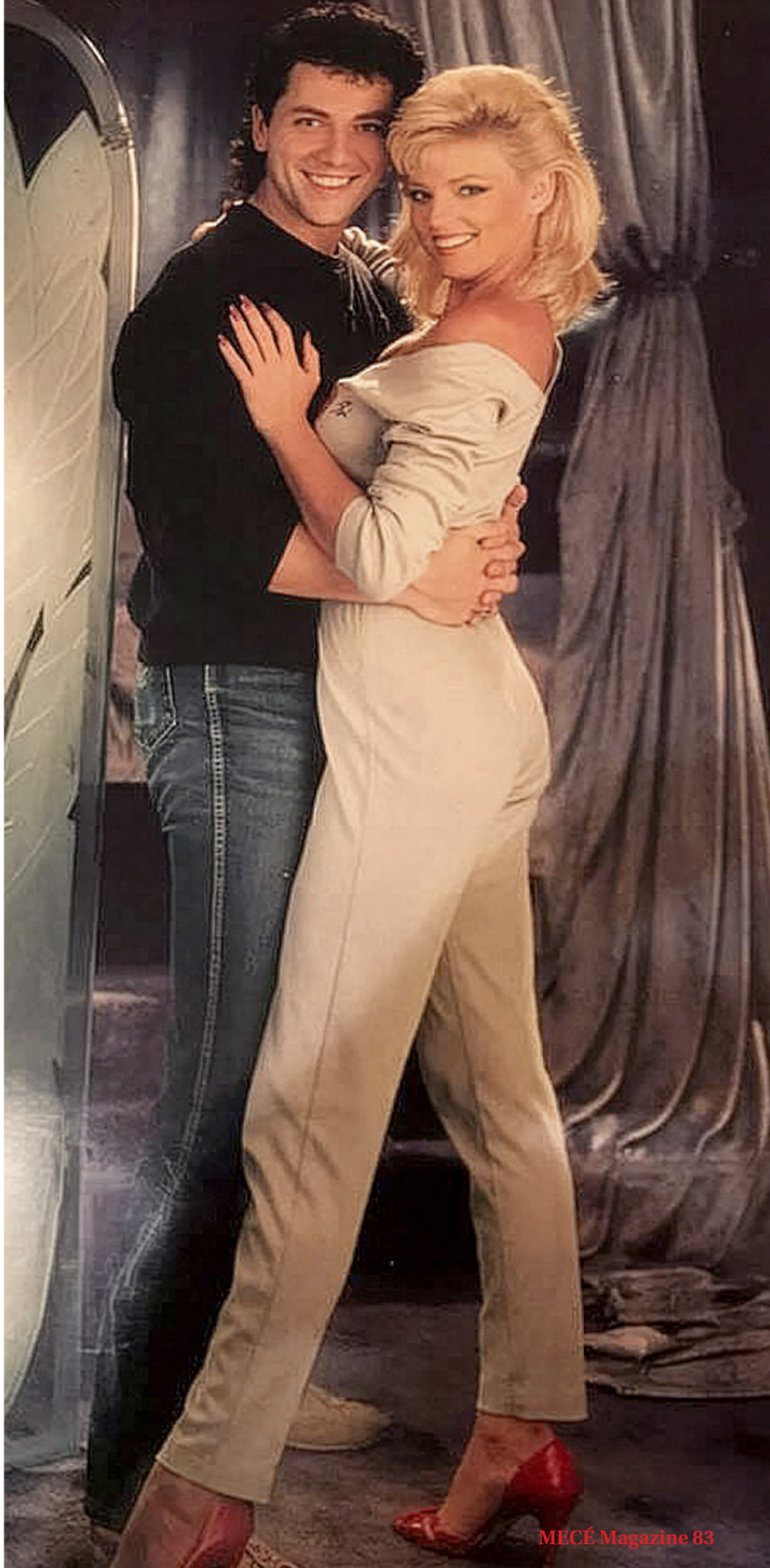
Once PB saw her naked in her test photos it was not even a question as to her becoming a Playmate but how soon could they get her gatefold shot! They kept her in Chicago for a few days before she told them she had to go back to Florida. I mean, she had a job for goodness sakes and she was not working, not making any money!

So, they had me hire her to be a model for a full-page editorial shot, which was this picture seen here holding the tray. Shot on film with a Hasselblad in the studio. She flew home right after. It was only a few weeks later I heard they flew her to LA for her gatefold shoot, but of course, LA, not Chicago.

She would become a very popular Playmate and Playboy would eventually do a pictorial on the Girls of Hooters. Which reminds me, I miss those days of doing multi-girl pictorials. They were a staple of the magazine that would happen throughout the year that would join the annual college girl feature we also did. Going out on the road doing those were strenuous, yes, but also a lot of fun. I got to see so much of the country and meet tons of people, most of whom were fans of the magazine.

Once we get some stronger footing in the marketplace, maybe we'll give that a go to see how it might work. Keeping the number of ladies to maybe a half dozen, but certainly a way to fill the pages of MECÉ with more beauty from around the country.

But this was the story of Lynn Austin, the Hooter's girl who did a billboard, then ended up as one of the most popular Playmates of the magazine's classic era. And one I can be proud to say was another one of my finds…



**PLAYBOY ENTERPRISES, INC.**

Jan. 27, 1984

Ms Lynne Austin
[redacted]
Clearwater, Florida

Dear Lynne,

First off, Hi! I'm very glad you've decided to give PLAYBOY a shot. Stay excited, okay?

Now, in regards to PLAYBOY'S guidelines regarding the publishing of photographs. PLAYBOY will in no way, shape or form, publish any photographs of you, without first obtaining a signed model release form.

At the time of your Playmate test (if it should occur), we will have you fill out a Playmate data sheet. This is an extensive questionnaire that gives us the information to help us to determine your background, goals, ambitions, etc., and just a basic knowledge of who Lynne Austin is.

You do not have to sign the model release form on the back of the data sheet at the time of your test, unless you feel comfortable about doing it. But, should PLAYBOY decide to bring you back to Chicago, for the purpose of doing a gatefold picture (centerfold) to present to Mr. Hefner for his consideration, you are then expected to sign a release for that shooting, and all other subsequent photography with us.

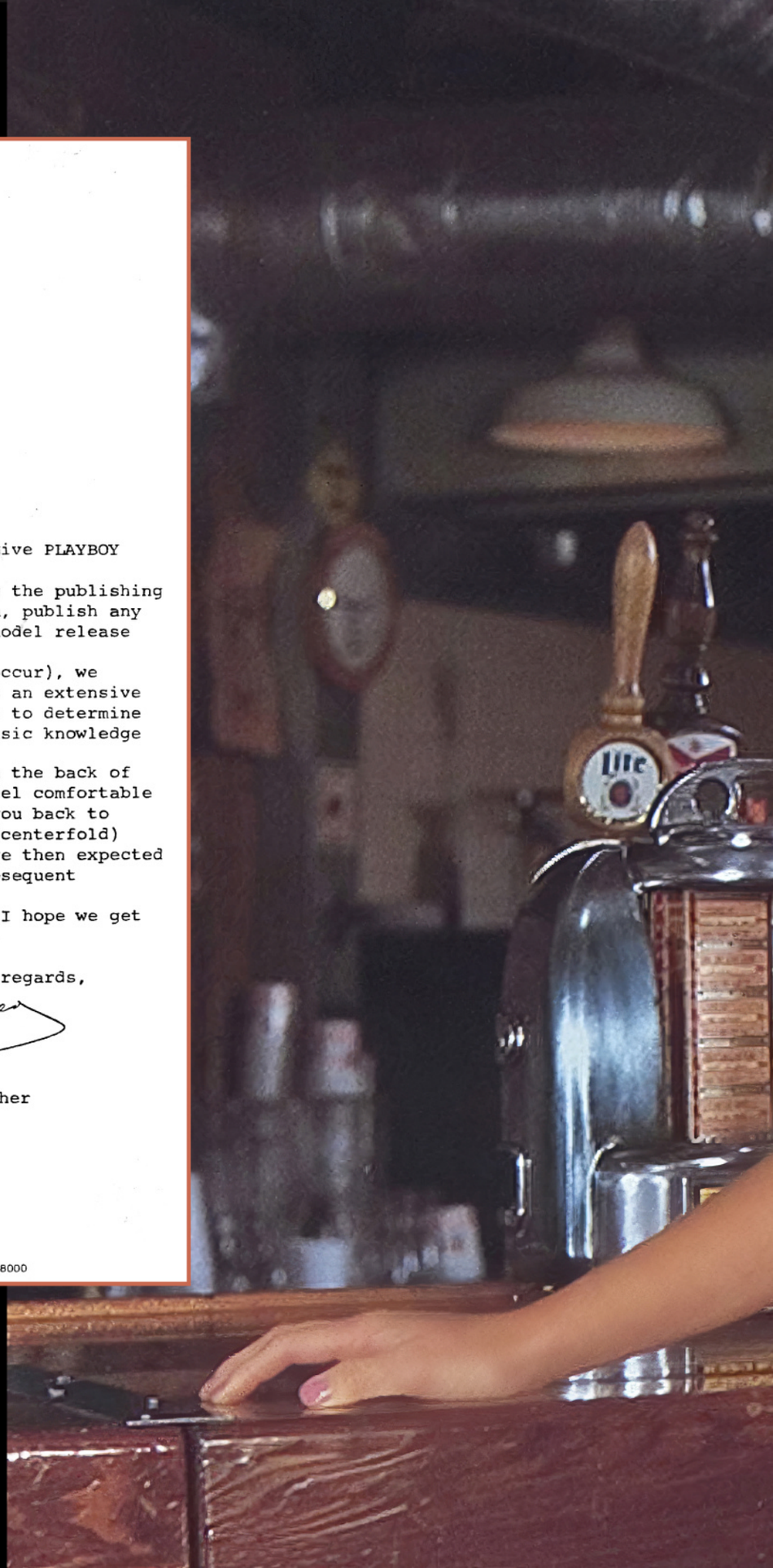
Whew, there, I hope all is okay! Take care, and I hope we get to meet soon!

Always kindest regards,

David Mecey
Staff Photographer
PLAYBOY

re: djm

THE PLAYBOY BUILDING/919 NORTH MICHIGAN AVENUE/CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60611/312 PL 1-8000



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Where the heck has this year gone? We keep asking this but it's just so true. Here we are already looking ahead to August. That puts us basically on track to start the home stretch that leads us to 'those' holiday months. Which of course ends in, if you can believe it, another year! What?!

Our founder is still reeling from his last birthday for God's sake! And that was back in February!

Well, let's just say we are not resting on our laurels, that's for sure. We are not only preparing for August, but also September, October and beyond. No moss gathering on these stones…

With that said, we've got some great stuff planned for our August issue. Let's begin with one hot Russian model shared with us by our Dallas contributing photographer, Wade Monroe. This peek photo is just a sample from the set he built outdoors for her photo shoot. Not just any set, but an office built right smack dab in the middle of a huge park in Dallas!

Gotta hand it to Wade, nothing ventured, nothing gained. Well, he not only ventured but gained some great images of Auroraa for the August issue.

# Your Sneak Peek

As always included is great wisdom from our in-house columnist, Tiffany Taylor along with another intriguing, and we're sure, fascinating article from our UK Editor, Mark Thomas.

Plug in more beautiful ladies, another fascinating subject for our Q&A-7 interview and voilà, we have one heck of an August issue for you! Grab a copy and we'll see you next month…

# MECÉ


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